

CLAIMS

I Claim:

1. A method for remotely shopping and ordering merchandise identified by digital barcode numbers electronically using a terminal device comprising the steps of:

electronically collecting a plurality of barcode numbers with a data collection device communicatively coupled to the terminal;

electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device, the shopper assistance portal maintaining information relating to a plurality of merchants and a plurality of product offered by the plurality of merchants;

downloading the information relating to a plurality of merchants and a plurality of products offered by the plurality of merchants to the terminal device from the shopper assistance portal and saving the information in a memory associated with the terminal device;

creating a potential order in the form of an active list of selected products from the information relating to a plurality of merchants and a plurality of products offered by the plurality of merchants saved in the memory;

uploading the active list of selected products to the shopper assistance portal from the terminal device; and,

electronically providing at least a first portion of the active list of selected products to at least a first merchant of the plurality of merchants for placing at least a first portion of the order.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of electronically collecting a plurality of barcode numbers with a data collection device communicatively coupled to the terminal comprises:

one of scanning a barcode symbol with a barcode scanner, speaking a barcode number into a digital voice recorder, keying-in a barcode number, digitally importing a barcode number, and scanning a RFID tag number with an RFID scanner.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the data collection device can be activated a plurality of times to build the active list.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
electronically providing a second portion of the active list of selected products to a second merchant of the plurality of merchants for placing a second portion of the order.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
displaying the plurality of products on the terminal device;

electronically selecting a first product offered by a first manufacture of the plurality of products displayed;

electronically requesting a comparison of other products with the first product; and,
displaying similar products offered by other manufacturers to the first product.

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6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

displaying a plurality of products on the terminal device;

electronically selecting a first product offered by a first manufacture of the plurality of products displayed;

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electronically requesting a comparison of other products with the first product; and,
displaying similar products to the first product being offered by the first manufacture.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

selecting a product displayed on the terminal device; and,

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providing a detailed description of the selected product from the shopper assistance portal to the terminal device.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

electronically submitting a request for a search of a product to the shopper assistance portal; and,

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displaying products by the shopper assistance portal responsive to the requested search to the terminal device.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the terminal device is a stand-alone device and wherein the step of electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device comprises using the stand-alone device to connect to the shopper assistance portal over the Internet.

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10. The method of claim 1 wherein the terminal device is a personal computer and wherein the step of electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device comprises using the personal computer to connect to the shopper assistance portal over the Internet.

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11. The method of claim 1 wherein the terminal device is a personal computer and wherein the step of electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device comprises using the personal computer to connect to the shopper assistance portal over the direct distance dial telephone network.

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12. The method of claim 1 wherein the terminal device is a programmable web enabled cell phone and wherein the step of electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device comprises using the programmable web enabled cell phone to connect to the shopper assistance portal over the Internet.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the terminal device is a stand-alone device and wherein the step of electronically connecting to a shopper assistance portal using a terminal device comprises using the stand-alone device to connect to the shopper assistance portal over a direct distance dial telephone network.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
providing the shopper assistance portal with a geographical location of placement of the order; and,
displaying a list of merchants offering selected products in the potential order that service the location.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the user of the terminal device provides the shopper assistance portal with an alternative geographical location.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of:
sorting the list of merchants as to the number of products each listed merchant has of the potential order.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:
electronically completing purchase of a selected product from a listed merchant.

18. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
saving the active list on the terminal device.

19. A method for electronically providing product specific advertising to a prospective purchaser comprising the steps of:
electronically receiving an active list of selected products by a shopper assistance portal from a terminal device; and,
electronically transmitting to the terminal device a first advertisement from a merchant associated with the shopper assistance portal responsive to at least a first product from the active list of selected products.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:
electronically transmitting to the terminal device a second advertisement from the merchant associated with the shopper assistance portal responsive to a second product from the active list of selected products.

21. The method of claim 19 further comprising the steps of:
electronically receiving a list of products from the merchant by the shopper assistance portal;
electronically receiving corresponding advertisements for the products in the list of products from the merchant by the shopper assistance portal; and,
and electronically receiving corresponding URL addresses to the corresponding advertisements by the merchant to link prospective purchasers to the corresponding advertisements by the shopper assistance portal.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of electronically transmitting to the terminal device a first advertisement from a merchant by the shopper assistance portal responsive to at least a first product from the active list of selected products comprises transmitting the first advertisement from a merchant that services the location selected by the purchaser using the terminal device.

23. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:
searching the active list by the shopper assistance portal for products that match criteria set forth by a first merchant that services the location selected by the purchaser using the terminal device.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of:
selecting an advertisement from the first merchant for transmission to the terminal device.

25. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of:
searching the active list by the shopper assistance portal for products that match criteria set forth by a second merchant that services a location of the purchaser using the terminal device.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of:
selecting an advertisement from the second merchant for transmission to the terminal device.

27. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:
receiving a transmission from the terminal device disabling the shopper assistance
portal from performing the step of electronically transmitting to the terminal device at least a
first advertisement from a merchant by the shopper assistance portal responsive to at least a
5 first product from the active list of selected products.

28. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:
providing a link to a website maintained by the merchant through the first
advertisement.
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29. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:
electronically receiving an order for a product identified in the first advertisement
from the terminal device.
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30. The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of:
electronically receiving an order for a product identified in the second advertisement
from the terminal device.
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